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## FIRST PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE AMERICAN EXCAVATIONS AT SARDES IN ASIA MINOR

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It has been proposed that a brief statement of the progress of the work on the American excavations at Sardes be made at the end of each season's campaign, and that this report be published, as early as possible, in the *American Journal of Archaeology*. It will not be possible, in these reports, to make a formal publication of any of the monuments or inscriptions discovered in a season; for the reports can be little more than a résumé of the work done from year to year, and will serve only to give archaeologists who may be interested in archaeological research in Asia Minor a preliminary general view of the progress of the excavations, pending the detailed reports of the work which will appear later. This first preliminary report must, of necessity, be particularly incomplete; for it is impossible to speak definitely of levels or stratifications, or to give them names and dates, until a comparatively large area of each level has been cleared; it is difficult to describe buildings that have been only partly uncovered, and unwise to discuss inscriptions or marbles, or pottery or small bronzes, until there has been ample time to study them, and to compare them with known inscriptions or objects which have been thoroughly studied and the ages of which have been determined. But a brief description of the site and some account of our first season's work may not be out of place in this first report.

Sardes, as has been frequently pointed out by archaeologists during the past fifty years, is a peculiarly favorable site for excavation. The cities of various historical epochs are not superposed one above the other, as is known to have been the case in many important ancient centres of civilization, but are spread out over a large area at the base of the mountain which served as an acropolis for each succeeding era of the city's his-

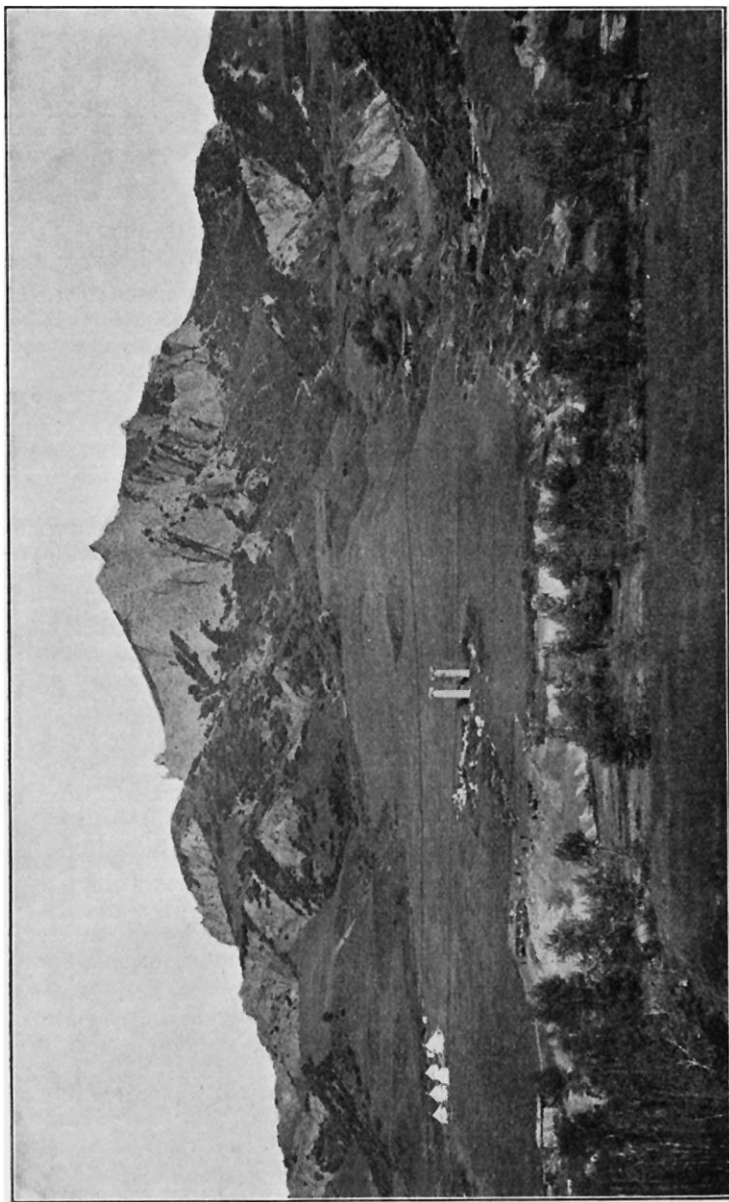


FIGURE 1.—VIEW OF SARDES FROM THE WEST, SHOWING ACROPOLIS, COLUMNS OF TEMPLE, EXCAVATIONS, AND CAMP.

tory. The most ancient of the lower cities was built on the west side of the mountain, between the acropolis and the river Pactolus, and may have spread to the farther bank of the river, unless present signs fail. Here also, apparently, was the Lydian city of historical times, which became a Persian capital and afterwards grew into the Hellenistic city that came under Roman sway in the later centuries preceding the Christian era. Here it is that the two great Ionic columns, never finished, have long marked the site of the earlier town of Sardes (Fig. 1). But this was not the site of the Roman city *par excellence*; for the ruins of a typical city of the empire, consisting of a theatre, a circus, and remains of other large edifices, are to be seen on the north and northeast of the acropolis, separated from the older site by a shoulder of the mountain that extends down to the river. This Roman city seems to have clung to the side of the acropolis, and terrace was built above terrace to elevate the buildings above the plain that stretches out toward the greater river, the Hermus. Still another city, one built in Byzantine times, was placed below the Roman town, and its crudely built walls, its baths and basilica, all containing fragments of Roman architectural details, lie well out in the plain. The reason for the choosing of different locations for three at least of the towns built upon this site may not be far to seek. The geological structure of the acropolis is not rock, but a hard clay-like substance full of gravel and large pebbles; it does not resist erosion well, and the hill that was once crowned by an upper city, as we know from inscriptions, and by a far-famed stronghold, as we learn from history, is now a mere knife-blade, having been washed away into the valleys below. It seems highly probable that the constant descent of débris from the acropolis on its west side, where the effect of the most violent storms is still most disastrously felt, rendered the early site untenable in later centuries, and that the same inconvenience, though felt to a lesser degree on the north, caused the abandonment of the Roman city built on the slopes, and the erection of the Byzantine city out on the plain where the effects of erosion are greatly diminished. It should be possible, in the course of our excavation, to determine whether the original site was gradually abandoned, and was slowly buried by the wash from the hill,

or whether the destruction of the town in the year 17 A.D., which is a matter of history, was really caused by a great landslide on the west side of the acropolis. If such was the case, the city built by the Emperor Tiberius in place of the one destroyed, which is also a matter of history and is further attested by inscriptions, is represented by the ruins of Roman buildings on the north slope of the acropolis, and one may assume that the older city remains substantially as it was buried in the first century of our era. Our excavations thus far have discovered no evidence opposed to this assumption.

The excavations were begun in March and continued into July of the present year, 1910, under my direction. Mr. Charles F. Cook, C.E., was engineer in charge, and Mr. Charles N. Reed, C.E., assistant engineer. Mr. Harold W. Bell went out to take charge of the pottery and small objects discovered, and Professor David M. Robinson came over from the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, for a few weeks, to copy the inscriptions for publication. There being no town near by, nor any habitable houses, the hovels of the peasants being uncomfortable and unsanitary, it was necessary for us to live in tents, which were pitched near the standing columns.

The work of the first season has been, as the work of many seasons to come will probably be, devoted to the unearthing of the old city between the acropolis and the Pactolus. This city on the western slope is deeply buried in soil from six metres deep at the river to probably ten metres deep at the columns, and still deeper toward the acropolis. The long gradual slope of the present surface is cut sharply off at the river side where the water, owing to a change of the stream bed, has undermined the bank of accumulated soil and débris, and has left a perpendicular face which presents a useful cross-section of the stratifications at this point. This cross-section shows, at the bottom, a level bed of hardpan which of course represents the lowest possible stratum of human occupation and which we have called level number one. We began our operations on this level, cutting a face about thirty metres wide in the river bank, directly west of the two standing columns, and digging towards them; but before we had found anything of importance, or even

any indication of archaeological remains, we came upon a pavement and other signs of a stratum of culture at a level of about a metre and a half above the original level, which we called level number two. The face of the cutting was then widened to fifty metres, and excavations were carried along on the new level for twenty metres, or more, towards the columns, disclosing one complete building, parts of another, and two rows of bases which had supported statues and stelae. The building which was completely excavated on this level is, I believe, a structure of great antiquity ; it is long and narrow, lying nearly north-east and southwest, and having, along its long west side, a flight of six steps terminating against solid square structures at the corners of the building. The walls of the ends and of the other long side are flat and unbroken, and are preserved, in places, to a height of a metre above the pavement of the interior. These walls above the pavement are nearly a metre thick and probably were much higher than they are at present. There is evidence to show that a row of columns stood at the top of the flight of steps. The building thus had the form of a much elevated stoa. The whole structure was built of unevenly shaped blocks of a friable sandstone, which appears in a quarry further down the stream and is the only material resembling stone in the immediate vicinity of Sardes. This material, which is hardly fit for building purposes and can be crushed between finger and thumb, was laid in clay, but the outer surfaces were covered with two coats of fine stucco very similar to that seen in buildings of the Mycenaean epoch, so hard and so durable that it has preserved the very perishable wall behind it. No imported stone was used in the whole structure, except for the pavement, where a porous limestone was used, and for the bottom step of marble, which was carried under the face of the parotid walls. This step, however, may have been inserted long after the erection of the building. A fragment of a Persian tile of a beautiful blue, like that of the tiles from Susa, was found in a corner of the building, lying flat upon the pavement.

To the north and south of this building are rows of bases, or pedestals, consisting of a larger and a smaller block of well-dressed marble, the smaller block, which is naturally the upper,

having in every case a sinking, or mortise, carefully cut to receive the tenon at the bottom of a statue or a stele; in some cases the tenon is still in place, well leaded in, but all the statues and stelae have disappeared. There are bases of this kind in front of the parotids of the long building. Only two or three of these bases, curiously enough, are set upon the pavement which can be traced on the south and west of the building; most of them stand on hard-packed earth, from thirty to fifty centimetres above that level. In several instances the pavement extends under the earth beneath a pedestal, and the rough unfinished surface of the lower part of the sides of the pedestals shows that they were to be sunk in the earth; so that the distance from the old pavement to the original level about the pedestals is from fifty to seventy-five centimetres. The pavement, then, and the old building, which was certainly coeval with it, are older than the pedestals, or older than most of them, the pavement having been buried for some time when the pedestals were set up. Most of the pedestals are perfectly plain, such as might have been used in any historical period; but their very plainness argues for an early, rather than a late, date; two have mouldings of profiles which I believe to be early, at least as early as the fifth century B.C., a third may be of the fourth century. None of these pedestals bears an inscription; but a cylindrical pedestal for a statue was found, not *in situ*, near the steps of the long building and on the level of the third step from the top, with a long inscription which may be as late as the first century after Christ.

As excavations proceeded on the level which I have been describing, we came upon a solid structure, about three metres square, composed of large blocks of white marble carefully fitted together but with unfinished surfaces, standing to the south of the oblong building, and, a little later, a similar structure directly east of the first, and then a row of three huge masses of marble extending northward from the second, behind the oblong building, absolutely parallel with it, and about four metres east of it (Fig. 2). It was evident that these structures were foundation piers; for they were not intended to be seen, and several of them had been partly encased in rubble masonry which had been rudely dumped into trenches which

were dug about them some time after they had been constructed. It occurred to me at once that these were probably the foundations of columns, as the spacing suggested that probability; but the distance to the two standing columns was so great that it did not at first occur to me that there could be any connection between them and our pedestals; but, as more piers were excavated on the south side, extending toward the columns, the spacing, the bearing, and the alignment of our piers made it more and more evident that there must be some connection

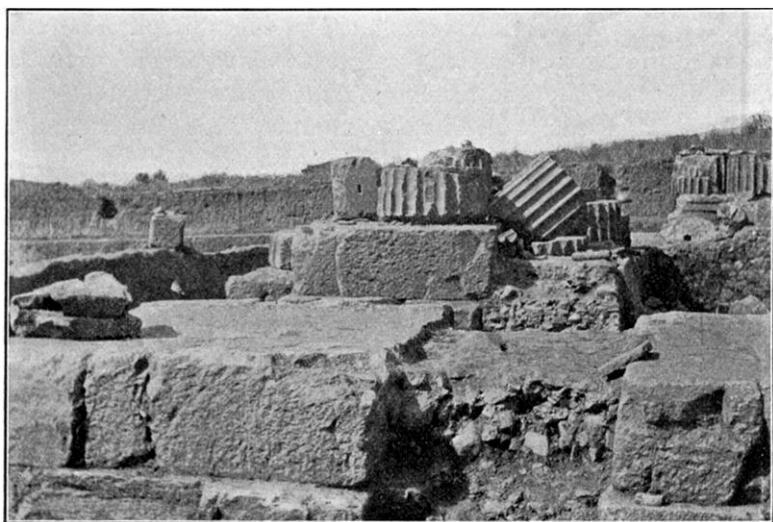


FIGURE 2.—THE EXCAVATIONS FROM THE SOUTH. MARBLE FOUNDATION PIERS.

between the two, and it was presently proved beyond a doubt that we were working in the west porch of the temple whose east porch is marked by the columns standing a hundred metres away. We continued to work on the old level as long, and at as many points, as possible, on the chance of finding remains of an older temple among the substructures of the later one; but when the foundations of the west wall of the cella were reached, we were obliged to abandon the older level and to come up about three metres to a new level which soon proved to be the pavement level of the porch and cella of the great temple. As the soil above the new level became deeper, we found more



and more of the building preserved, and, toward the end of the campaign, came upon a portion of the north wall of the opisthodomos preserved to a height of over two metres above the interior pavement. This wall, which is of unusual thickness, has a heavy moulding on its exterior and interior faces, is exquisitely joined and highly finished, and bears upon its inner face a long Greek inscription the date of which may be placed in the fourth or the third century B.C. The inscription, moreover, definitely proves that the temple was sacred to Artemis, bearing out the theory advanced by M. Georges Radet in his *Cybélé*. Fortunately it answers two of the most important questions regarding the temple, giving a *terminus ad quem* for the date of the temple, and naming Artemis as its goddess.

The excavations, which had begun at a width of fifty metres, were continued until the end of the season at the same width, reaching a distance of seventy-five metres on either side; but the face of the cutting was not parallel to the line of the west end of the temple, and, as the temple is more than fifty metres wide, we did not uncover its entire width. At the end of the season we had unearthed seven piers, or foundations for columns, on the south flank of the temple and a short section of steps on that side, we had discovered, or accounted for, six columns of the west porch and two of the inner row at the west end, the entire width of the west end of the cella with one course above the pavement *in situ*, a part of the north wall of the cella (that is, of the opisthodomos) with three courses and an inscription *in situ*, two piers for interior columns in the opisthodomos, and a fine flight of steps on the north side of the west porch (Fig. 3) within the outer row of columns. Since we have disclosed the width of the cella, and several of the piers of the columns of the south flank, it is evident that the temple was octastyle, though the seventh and eighth columns at the north end of the west porch are still to be excavated. It is further evident that the plan was one that is often called *pseudo-dipteral*, the space between the side columns and the cella wall being wide enough for a second row of columns. The exact number of columns on the sides is as yet unknown; but since the distance from the southwest pier to the southeast column measures ninety-five metres on centres,

it would seem that there must have been twenty or more ; but it is unwise to count your columns before they are excavated.

The complete destruction of this end of the temple, and the disappearance of all details of architecture and sculpture, may be explained only by the fact, quite capable of proof, that this end of the building bordering upon the river was not deeply buried in Roman and Byzantine times, and by assuming that the ruins of the temple, exposed during the centuries when

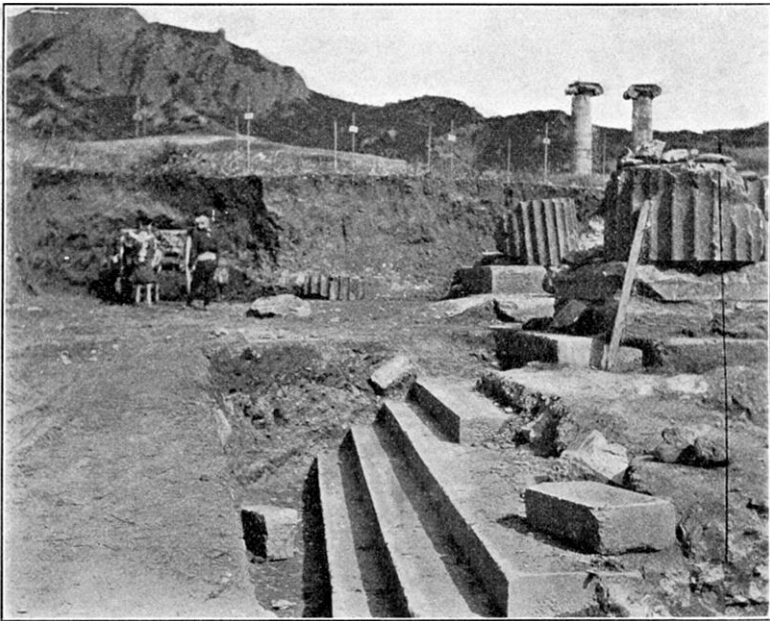


FIGURE 3.—VIEW FROM THE WEST. STEPS AND INNER ROW OF BASES.

Roman and Byzantine Sardes were building, were used as quarries and lime kilns. Layers of chipped marble on levels above the temple pavement give good evidence of this, and the presence of three different lime kilns, not far below the surface, adds further proof. Two of the piers of the west porch — the second and the sixth from the south end — were excavated in ancient times for the marble in them, to their lowest foundations, the sixth having been dug out of its concrete casing which still remains. The southwest angle suffered most severely at the hands of the quarry-men or the lime makers, for here the

piers are only a metre high, while further east and north some of the piers are from two to three metres high, and two of them have the moulded plinths of their column bases still in place ; the bases proper, with richly wrought torus mouldings, finely carved reeds and deep scotias, were represented only in fragments prepared for the lime kiln.

It is quite plain that the ancient despoilers of the ruins had no notion of the plan of the building they were breaking up, for when they had discovered a mass of marble, representing one pier that was for some reason more exposed than the others, they dug it out entirely, ignoring the existence of the buried piers on either side of it. It is equally evident that two or three columns at the northwest angle remained standing while the despoliation of the ruin was in progress, for broken capitals and fluted drums were found at a high level, resting on soil that had been cultivated, and barely covered by the present level of cultivation. During this period, either Roman or Byzantine, the chamber at the west end of the temple was converted into a reservoir ; the débris inside the chamber was levelled down and filled in with broken stone, and then covered with a pavement of pink cement, *opus signinum*, at a level a metre or more above the original pavement of the chamber. The massive walls were coated with cement and formed the sides of a reservoir probably two or three metres deep ; the water was carried away to the north by a great number of tile pipes which we found in large quantities in our excavation, the trenches for which followed tortuous courses among the ruins and ancient foundations which had long been buried when the pipes were being laid. In the latest period of quarrying and lime making the reservoir must have been abandoned ; for its west wall was broken up and carried away.

The dates of the earlier periods of marble-breaking, and of the reservoir, are approximately determinable from coins of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. found on these levels ; while the higher levels furnish coins of the later Byzantine centuries and the first century of the Moslem era. The coins, as might have been expected, have been of great assistance in determining the approximate age of the various levels. Almost all of the coins discovered thus far are of bronze. The earlier ones are badly

corroded; but those that have been cleaned thus far have shown that the débris between the second level from the bottom and the level of the temple pavement contains only coins of the second, third, and fourth centuries B.C., while the soil above the temple pavement furnishes only coins which date from the third century to the ninth century A.D. Up to the present time no coins of the Roman Empire earlier than the third century have been found in the excavations, though many Roman coins of the first and second centuries A.D. have been brought to me by peasants who found them while ploughing fields on the other side of the acropolis.

At the close of the season, early in July, we had reached a point in the excavations where the operations of the stone breakers and lime makers had practically ceased, and where the greater depth of the soil above the temple platform had preserved more perfectly all the details of the building. The walls of the cella were found to be intact to a height of from two to three metres, and a beautifully carved Ionic capital, and other details, were found almost intact. One would hardly look for statues in an opisthodomos that had been converted into a reservoir, yet one of the three broken statues which we found was a specimen of later work, probably Roman, which had been used in the filling underneath the cement pavement of the reservoir. The other two, one late Greek and one later Roman and unfinished, were found in a filling just west of the west wall.

In addition to the important inscription found in the temple, and the other inscriptions of greater or less historical value discovered in the excavations, all of which were copied by Dr. Robinson, almost all of the known inscriptions in the walls of the acropolis were recopied with the aid of a ladder, and squeezes were made from a number which formerly had been studied only from the ground by means of a field glass (Fig. 4). One long inscription, almost intact, and hitherto unknown, was taken out of the acropolis wall; while a large number of small inscriptions and fragments of longer ones were collected by Dr. Robinson and M. de Vidas, the Imperial Commissioner, and brought to the camp for preservation in the depot for antiquities which we have now completed; many of these were

unknown. In the same manner a small collection of torsos, less than life size, and of sculptured architectural details, was secured from the peasants, and is now in the depot of the excavations.

During the rainy days of May, a number of tombs which had been discovered in the mountain side across the river, facing the excavations, were opened and examined under the supervision of Mr. Bell. The steep faces of the mountain are honeycombed with these tombs which have been filled with

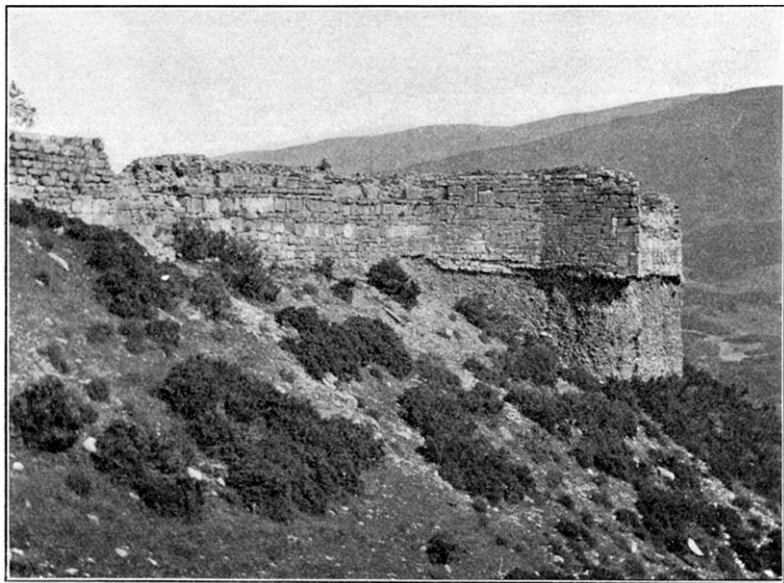


FIGURE 4. — PART OF THE WALL OF THE ACROPOLIS.

soil by wind and rain, and are not noticeable to the casual observer. Those which were opened proved to be part of an ancient Lydian necropolis. Each tomb consists of a passage, or *dromos*, closed by a door composed of one large stone, or by a number of small flat stones. One of these bore three complete inscriptions in the script, as yet undeciphered, which has been called Lydian, all the examples of it found hitherto having come from ancient Lydia, though not, so far as I know, from Sardes. The *dromos* of each tomb, long and narrow, but high enough to stand up in, leads to a chamber, hewn out of the hard clay of the mountain, with pointed, double-

pitched roof and double couches, also hewn in the clay, on either hand and at the end of the chamber opposite the entrance. In one tomb, in place of the third couch, was a staircase descending to another passage which terminated in a lower chamber similar to the upper. Most of the tombs which we opened had been rifled, probably by Greeks or Romans, at a very early date; for many centuries would be required for the accumulation of the finely pulverized soil which now completely fills them. A majority of the tombs, however, contained pottery, beautiful in form and good in quality, but entirely without painted ornament. The vases suggest no Greek forms, and show no Hellenic influence. With the vases in some of the tombs were found small bronze objects, such as flat mirrors, well made but without ornament, rings, and other objects, and, in one, a ring with an Egyptian scarab. Alabaster of Egyptian form were found in more than one tomb. It is plain that inhumation was practised here, that is, that unburned bodies were laid upon the couches, but the discovery of a large vase full of charred human bones, and of fragments of similar vases, shows that cremation was also practised. It is as yet impossible to know if the charred bones are the remains of funeral sacrifice; for many more tombs must be opened before trustworthy deductions can be drawn from them.

In one of the tombs which have certainly not been rifled three gold necklaces were discovered. The gold work is of exceptionally fine quality, one necklace having been made up of delicate flower-like units, and another representing pepper-corns with berry, flower, and stem. One tomb contained a sarcophagus of terra-cotta, well made but without ornament; the sarcophagus was sunk in a grave in the top of a couch, but its lid was not buried. The contents of all the tombs that have been opened appear to belong to a period considerably earlier than that of any of the objects or buildings unearthed in the excavations.

A brief report on the Greek and Latin inscriptions, by Professor Robinson, follows, and one on the Lydian inscriptions, by Professor Littmann, of Strassburg, will be published in the next issue of this *Journal*.

HOWARD CROSBY BUTLER.